

habitats for fish and wildlife, and they serve as critical storehouses of biodiversity. From mountains and meadows to river valleys and forests, our lands and waters also help drive local economies by creating jobs in tourism and recreation. Our open spaces are more precious today than ever before, and it is essential that we come together to protect them for the next generation.

American conservation practices inspired countries around the world during the 20th century, and my Administration is working to carry that legacy forward during the 21st. In my first months as President, I was proud to sign a public lands bill that designated more than 2 million acres of wilderness, over 1,000 miles of wild and scenic rivers, and three National Parks. We also launched the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, which laid the foundation for a comprehensive, community-driven conservation strategy that continues to engage Americans in protecting and increasing access to our natural heritage. Today, projects spanning from the Atlantic to the Pacific are helping create and enhance parks, renew and restore our rivers, and conserve our iconic open spaces.

Generations of visionary leaders and communities have given of themselves to preserve our wild landscapes, fulfilling a responsibility that falls to us all as Americans and as inhabitants of this small planet. During National Wilderness Month, let us celebrate the progress we have made toward meeting that essential challenge, and let us recommit to protecting the land we love for centuries to come.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 2012 as National Wilderness Month. I invite all Americans to visit and enjoy our wilderness areas, to learn about their vast history, and to aid in the protection of our precious national treasures.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-seventh.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8857 of August 31, 2012**Labor Day, 2012**

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Through times of prosperity and hardship alike, America counts on the strength and dynamism of the world's finest labor force. From the factory floor and the office to the classroom and the interstate, working men and women are the unshakable foundation of American innovation and economic growth. On Labor Day, we celebrate their vital role and reaffirm that America will always stand behind our workers.

The rights and benefits we enjoy today were not simply handed to working men and women; they had to be won. Brick by brick, America's labor unions helped raise the landmarks of middle-class security: the 40-hour workweek and weekends, paid leave and pensions, the minimum wage and health insurance, Social Security and Medicare. These are the victories that make our Nation's promise possible—the idea that if we work hard and play by the rules, we can make a better life for ourselves and our families.

I am committed to preserving the collective bargaining rights that helped build the greatest middle class the world has ever known. It is the fundamental right of every American to have a voice on the job, and a chance to negotiate for fair pay, safe working conditions, and a secure retirement. When we uphold these basic principles, our middle class grows and everybody prospers.

Our Nation faces tough times, but I have never stopped betting on the American worker. This is the labor force that revolutionized the assembly line and built the arsenal of democracy that defeated fascism in World War II. These are the workers who built our homes, highways, and rail lines, who educate our children and care for the sick. American workers have taken us through the digital revolution and into a 21st-century economy. As my Administration fights to create good jobs and restore the American dream, I am confident that, together, we will emerge from today's challenges as we always have—stronger than ever before.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 3, 2012, as Labor Day. I call upon all public officials and people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that honor the contributions and resilience of working Americans.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-seventh.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8858 of September 7, 2012

National Grandparents Day, 2012

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Throughout our history, grandparents have guided their children and grandchildren through trial and triumph. For many of us, our grandparents were among our earliest teachers and caregivers. They have added immeasurably to the strength of our families, and with compassion and wisdom, they have enriched our lives with the stories of those who came before us. On National Grandparents Day, we give thanks to those who helped raise us and pay tribute to a generation that still inspires us toward brighter horizons.